

Rep. Ed Murray • 43rd District

Health care

Prescription medicines from Canada

This is a major reform that passed the House but did not get a vote in the Senate.



Americans pay more for prescription drugs than any country on earth. The taxpayers in Washington state spend about one billion dollars on prescription drugs.

As a taxpayer, you subsidize the research and development of new drugs. In return, drug companies charge us more while giving citizens in Canada and Europe a big discount.

If we bought our prescription medicines from Canada, we'd save 30 to 80 percent. Taxpayers could save \$300 million a year.

This is a reform with broad support from citizens and advocacy groups because it saves money for us all while getting people the medicines they need to stay healthy and alive.

This idea will be back next session and I'll continue to support it.

Better health benefits for children and seniors

We passed a number of reforms to improve health care. Two of those reforms made it into the state budget:

- \$20 million to reduce or eliminate premiums for children getting health care through Medicaid
- \$24 million for better pay and benefits for home health-care workers, who take care of thousands of seniors and disabled people in our state.



Keeping in Touch

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43rd District

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**2004
Session
Review**



Representative

Ed Murray

43rd District

2004 Session Review

Dear neighbors,

I believe citizens want strong reforms to unclog traffic, protect their civil rights and improve health care.

This newsletter is my chance to keep you informed about what happened – and didn't happen – during the 2004 session of the Legislature.

- Civil rights – What can we do to fight discriminate and hate in Washington state?
- Transportation – How can we unclog traffic in the heart of our state, the Seattle-Tacoma-Everett area, before gridlock gives our economy a coronary?
- Health care – With the price of prescription drugs skyrocketing, how can people afford the medicines that keep them alive and healthy?

To better serve you while the Legislature is out of session, I've opened an office in the district staffed by new legislative aide, Uriel Ybarra.

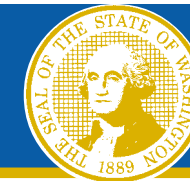
I know many of you are interested in specific issues, and this newsletter isn't long enough to discuss every bill that came before the House or Senate. If you have any questions, I encourage you to contact my office.

As always, I welcome your ideas, comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

REP. ED MURRAY

43rd District



Civil rights

Discrimination and hate

It's disappointing that Senate Republicans refused to take a stand against discrimination by passing House Bill 1809. There's nothing more important to our democracy than the notion that every citizen is created equal.

It's legal in this state to fire you for being gay, lesbian or bisexual.

It's legal for a bank to turn you down for a loan, for insurance companies to deny you health coverage and for hotels to refuse to rent you a room.

I believe it's the worst form of Big Brotherism for the state or federal government to not only peek into our bedrooms, but to use that invasion of privacy for the sake of intimidation and discrimination.

To stop a vote on this bill, the Senate adjourned early, killing nearly a hundred House bills to improve our schools, create jobs and give citizens more affordable health care.

I'll keep on fighting until we've removed the poisons of prejudice and hate from the law.

Marriage equality

Marriage is ultimately a state issue that should be addressed in state courts and in the state Legislature.

The battle for equality will be difficult and long, requiring patience and unity.

It will take more than the city recognizing marriage licenses. It will take years of litigation in the court and debates in the Legislature.

It will require the gay and lesbian community to educate our elected leaders who have supported us on civil rights, domestic partnership, and HIV/AIDS.

History tells us that scare tactics and narrow religious arguments were used in our lifetime to protect legal bans on interracial marriage. I have colleagues in the House and Senate who couldn't have married their partner 30 years ago — in some states, they'd be thrown in jail — because one of them is white and the other is black, Asian or Hispanic.

I believe the citizens of Washington want strong families, that they want the state to promote — not discourage — the notions of marriage of monogamy.

Washington state constitution, Article 31, Section 1:

Equality not denied because of sex

"Equality of rights and responsibility under the law shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex."



Transportation

What we did

We passed changes to the transportation budget to help get people to work and goods to market.

Those changes include:

- \$1 million for the "Safe Routes to Schools" program
- \$500,000 for the flex-car program to match federal funds to help low-income people in the Puget Sound area carpool to jobs or job training through car sharing or a flex-car program.
- Improving security on state ferries
- Speeding up projects to prepare for the 2010 Olympics in British Columbia, including new HOV lanes on I-5 near Everett
- Refunding \$14 million to taxpayers for truck registrations in excess of the \$30 mandated by I-776.
- \$13.9 million in freight mobility projects, including improvements at the Port of Seattle
- \$500,000 to protect the environment by giving the Department of Transportation the tools to identify sensitive lands that could be hurt by high-way construction.

We also protected the Vashon-Seattle ferry service from cuts.



House passed landmark reform

The House passed a number of bold reforms that the Senate refused to consider, including a landmark reform of transportation in our region.

- **HB 1960, Regional transportation governance.** Creates an elected council in 2005 to be responsible for transportation planning and coordination in King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties. This council will govern

the RTID and Sound Transit; and will decide their role in the governance of the monorail. The measure will be placed on a ballot for public vote.

A vision for the future

Traffic gridlock is strangling our economy and hurting our quality of life. Last year, we finally broke through partisan gridlock and passed the first new transportation funding in 13 years.

I believe we need to build on that progress by being smart about transportation. To give taxpayers more for their money, we need to invest in traffic solutions that move the most people for the lowest cost.

A top priority must be failing Alaska Way Viaduct and 520 Bridge without making Seattle taxpayers shoulder most of the burden. Taxpayers in King County already subsidize transportation in the rest of the state, and the viaduct and 520 are key parts of our state highways. If either failed during an earthquake or other disaster, it could cost our state thousands of lives and billions of dollars.

Next year's new transportation budget is our opportunity to make your daily commute easier — but we need your help.

The only way we'll get strong reforms that fix traffic next year is if citizens get informed and involved in the process — if people like yourself stand up and speak out.

Education

Fairness for our schools

If you support local schools, you know how tough passing levies can be. That's because schools need a supermajority — 60 percent — instead of the simple majority of 50 percent to win an election or pass an initiative.

Any politician who got 59.9 percent would call it a landslide. So why is 59.9 percent a failure for your local school?

I voted to reform the law so school levies could pass with 50 percent. The bill died in the Senate, where they didn't allow a vote.

Building new schools and colleges

In the year 2008, the biggest graduating class in state history will come out of high school and those students will come knocking at the University of Washington, Western, Washington State University and our other colleges — but 33,000 students will get turned away for lack of space.

We must build more colleges. I believe it's wrong to tell an entire generation of kids they can't earn a college degree, the surest ticket to the American Dream.

This year, I voted to fund our universities so they could add space for 3,000 more college students. I also voted for a state construction budget to build more labs and lecture halls at our universities and community colleges.

